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ABSTRACT

A 44-item questionnare was sent to 11,000 Child Development Associates in the fall of 1988 in an effort to provide an updated view of the constituency served by the Child Development Association (CDA) National Credentialing Program. The questionnaire covered four categories: (1) background information; (2) education and experience; (3) training for the CDA; and (4) salary and position increases after receipt of the CDA credential. Responses were received from 37 percent of those surveyed. It was found that the overwhelming majority of CDAs are females having an average age of 38 years at the time of the credential award. A variety of ethnic groups make up the CDA population; 53 percent of the population is white. CDAs, who are generally well-educated, work in a range of preschool settings. Nearly 80 percent worked for Headstart at the time of the credential award. CDAs receive considerable support from employers and the community. Most employers of CDAs paid all or part of the cost of their CDA training. Most CDAs teach, and their salaries are low. In 1988, 52 percent received a salary increase as a direct result of having earned the CDA credential. However, salary increases were minimal, with only 20 percent receiving increases over $500 a year. Position increases have shown a slight upward trend since 1983. The survey instrument is appended. (RH)

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THE 1988

CDA NATIONAL SURVEY

RESULTS

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Released March 1990

INTRODUCTION

Initiated in 1971, the Child Development Associate National Credentialing Program is a major national effort to evaluate and improve the skills of caregivers in center-based, family day care, and home visitor programs. A Child Development Associate, or CDA, is a person who has demonstrated competence in caring for young children and their parents during an assessment conducted by the CDA National Credentialing Program. Competent caregivers are awarded the Child Development Associate Credential.

The first CDA Credential was issued in 1975. Today, hundreds of thousands of children in the United States are being cared for by Child Development Associates and approximately 33,000 CDAs have been credentialed. They work in a variety of preschool settings in every state and the U.S. territories of Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The CDA Credential is also listed as a qualification for teaching staff and/or directors in child care regulations in 42 states and the District of Columbia.

Although not usually responsible for overseeing a total center program, CDAs are responsible for a group or classroom of children within a center or home, or a group of families and their children in a home visitor program. The quality of care they provide is an essential ingredient in the overall quality of the CDA

program, whose primary goal is to increase the caregiver's ability to meet the specific needs of children and to work with parents and other staff to nurture children's development.

FIRST NATIONAL SURVEY OF CDAs - 1983

By 1983, nearly 12,000 CDA Credentials had been awarded, yet there existed little empirical data about the CDA constituency. Indeed, little was known about the program outside the Head Start community. Therefore, the CDA National Credentialing Program, which was then managed by Bankstreet College of Education, launched a two-fold data collection effort: 1) The National Survey of CDAs, and 2) A Call for Anecdotal Reports from CDAs.

The survey was mailed to a random sample of 1,200 CDAs. A letter was also sent to 10,800 CDAs requesting personal stories about the CDA experience. A 46% response rate (489 CDAs) was received to the survey questionnaire and approximately 600 letters were returned from CDAs describing their personal and professional lives and the manner in which obtaining a CDA had affected them.

A summary report was released in 1985, entitled: "CDAs Speak: Major Findings of the National Survey of CDAs." This report provided data relevant to several questions and concerns about the more than 12,000 Child Development Associates:

1) What are the characteristics of CDAs along such basic dimensions as prior work experience, personal characteristics, positions held, and their involvement in the professional community?

2) Do CDAs get promoted?

3) Do CDAs get wage increases?

4) Do CDAs continue their education?

From the 489 CDAs responding to the survey questions and the 600 personal letters received, the study concluded:

- CDAs had a mean level of 7.7 years of experience working with young children;
- 76.5% had some college (28.9% had a two-year degree or better);
- CDAs are overwhelmingly female (98.8%) with an average age of 38 years at the time of credential award;
- CDAs represent a variety of ethnic groups with a slight majority being white (55.4%);
- Most CDAs (79.7%) work in Head Start programs;
- Over half (55.1%) of the CDAs are classroom teachers; 43.9% were in programs with more than 50 children;
- At the time of credential award, 53.1% of the CDAs were members of an early childhood professional organization; typically the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC);
- Approximately 40% of the CDAs received an increase in salary; 31% received a change in title or responsibility as a direct result of the credential award.

Even more positively, the personal letters from the 1983 research effort found that CDAs indicated heightened ability and confidence in working with young children along with the needed incentive and motivation to pursue other educational goals. Obtaining the CDA credential influenced 93% of the CDAs to continue their education.

TABLE 1

THE EFFECT OF CDA ON THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CAREGIVER

Item	Response	Percent
CDA Influenced them to continue education	Yes	93.0%
	No	7.0
Followed up on suggestions on CDA Profile	Yes	95.3%
	No	4.7
Feel more part of the professional community	Yes	93.0%
	No	7.0
CDA influenced them to join a professional organization	Yes	27.1%
	No	72.9
Received an increase in salary	Yes	39.7%
	No	60.3
Received a change in title or responsibility	Yes	31.1%
	No	68.9

Source: "CDAs Speak: Major Findings of the National Survey of CDAs, 1985." CDA National Credentialing Program, April 1985.

THE 1988 CDA NATIONAL SURVEY REPORT

As the CDA program enters the last decade of the 20th century, it remains important to keep policymakers and the public abreast of the impact of the CDA National Credentialing effort and

to provide an updated view of the constituency the program serves. With this goal in mind, the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition launched another research effort in the fall of 1988. Using the population pool between the time of the first survey in 1983 and 1988 (15,215 CDAs), a questionnaire with a brief cover letter was mailed to 11,000 CDAs (3% of them were renewals). There was a 37% response rate (4,081) to a 44-item, multiple choice questionnaire. The questionnaire covered four broad categories: 1) Background Information; 2) Education and Experience; 3) Training for CDA and 4) Salary/Position Increases After Receiving the CDA Credential.

BACKGROUND

As in the 1983 survey, it was found that CDAs are overwhelmingly mature females (98.0%), with an average age of 38 years at time of credential award. A variety of ethnic groups still compose the CDA population, with the majority continuing to be white (53.0%). See Table 2 below.

TABLE 2

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CDAs

AGE	18-25	(7%)
	26-35	(37%)
	36-40	(19%)
	41-50	(23%)
SEX	Male	(2%)
	Female	(98%)
ETHNIC BACKGROUND	White	(53%)
	Black	(34%)
	Hispanic	(9%)
	Am. Indian	(2%)
	Asian	(1%)

CDAs also work in a range of preschool settings: 80% in Head Start programs, center-based or home-based; 9% in day care, 7% in half-day care; and 4% are in family day care.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

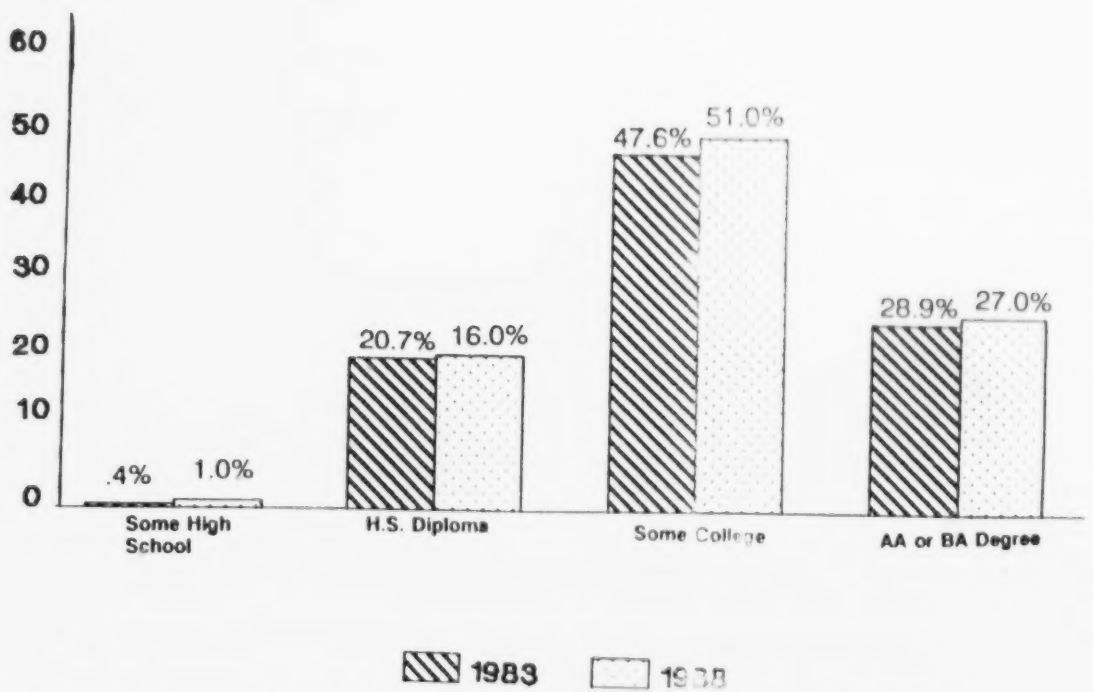
CDAS are generally well-educated (**See Figure 1**). In 1983, CDAs had a mean level of 7.7 years of experience working with young children and 76.5% had attended college. Of those that said they attended college (28.9%) indicated they had a two-year degree or better. In 1988, when credentialed, 51% had some college and 27% had obtained an Associate's, Bachelor's or a graduate degree. A significant number (63%) had worked with young children for more than five (5) years, with 30% having over ten (10) years of experience in child care settings

TRAINING FOR CDA

The Administration for Children, Youth and Families' Head Start Bureau initiated the national CDA effort in 1971 and continues to provide the impetus and much of the financial support for CDA training. Consequently, nearly 80% of the survey respondents both in 1983 and 1988 worked for Headstart at the time of credential award. In fact, 43% of the 4,081 respondents had also been a Head Start parent and 35% of that group had been a Head Start parent in the same program where they worked.

FIGURE 1

EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF CDAs: A Comparison: 1983 and 1988



At the time of the 1983 survey, information was not sought on how CDAs received assistance in paying for the cost of their training. This category of information was included, however, in the 1988 survey. The findings indicate that CDAs receive considerable support from their employers and the community. The data revealed that most (82%) had employers who paid all or part of the cost of their CDA training; 78% had employers who paid all or part of the registration/assessment fee, and 18% had their fees paid through state scholarships.

CDA training was received through multiple sources, with the highest number (63%) from their center sites; 21% received training through a local college; 27% through workshops in the community, and 21% from an outside consultant.

SALARY/POSITION CHANGES

In **Figure 2** we find that most CDAs teach (68%), with 46% serving as classroom teachers and 22% as assistant teachers. Despite their relatively high level of training and education the remuneration CDAs receive for their work with young children is low--no different from the general profile of the child care workforce. The 1988 survey data indicate, however, somewhat of an upward trend in terms of impact which the CDA has on salary/position change. In 1983, only 40% of the respondents said they had received a salary increase after becoming credentialed, while in 1988, 52% received a salary increase as a direct result of having earned the CDA credential (**See Figure 3**). The increases are minimal, however, with 43% receiving less than $100 annually, and only 20% receiving increases over $500 per year.

FIGURE 2

Position Levels of CDAs: 1983 and 1988

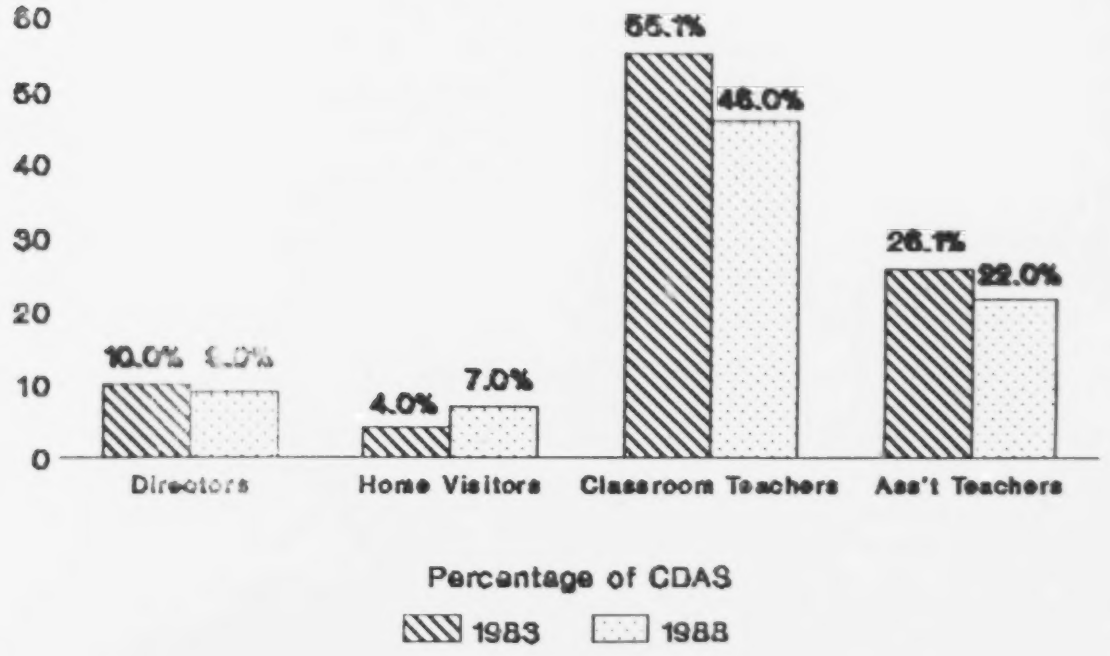
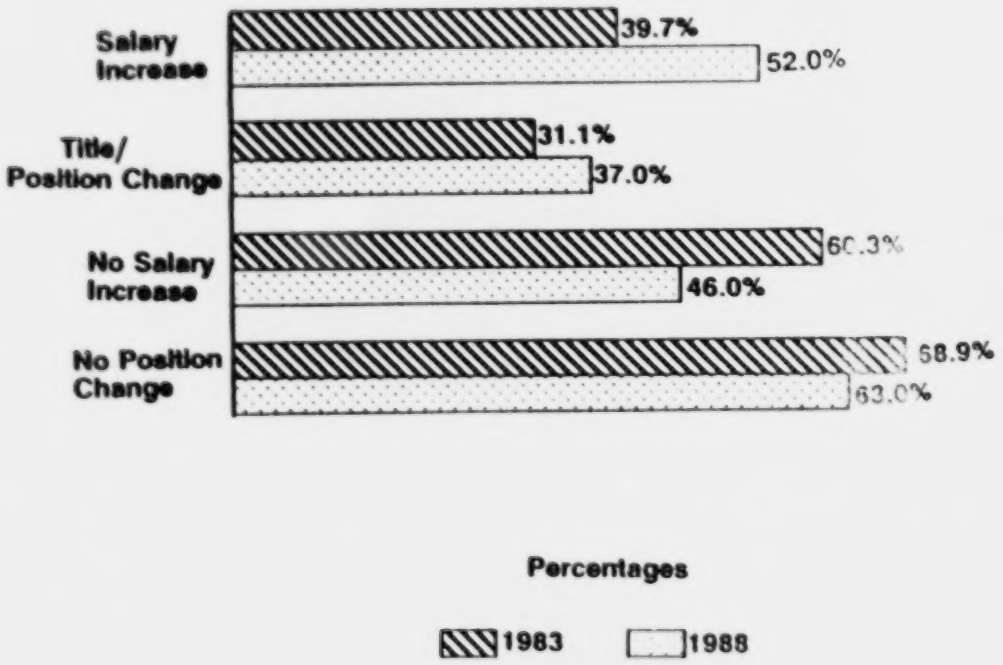


FIGURE 3

SALARY/POSITION LEVELS OF CDAs 1983 & 1988



Note: 2% of 1988 respondents did not answer the salary question.

Position increases also show a slight upward trend since 1983. Slightly more than 31% received a change in title or responsibility in the 1983 survey, whereas 37% became eligible for a better position in 1988 (**See Figure 3**). Of that total, 64% accepted positions as Teachers and 14% obtained administrative positions such as Director, Assistant Director or Center Administrator. Seventy-five percent (75%) were offered a better position within one year of receiving their credential. It appears that the act of obtaining a CDA in itself provided the leverage needed (in addition to education and experience) to move from an aide or assistant to one as Teacher, Head Teacher or Program Director.

When questioned about their current work positions, an interesting trend occurs. Although most major studies of annual turnover rates among staff show figures around 40%, a large majority of these CDAs (96%) were still working directly in programs for young children [up to 3 years after becoming CDAs]. Since the percentage among non-respondents may possibly be higher, further study is needed before interpreting these data.

CONCLUSION

While growth trends in status and recognition for CDAs are evident between the 198[illegible]nd 1988 survey data, it remains apparent that the problems of the child care workforce at large for greater status, recognition, salaries and promotion potential--in line with the rest of the professional labor force--also affect the CDA community.

In an innovative and hopefully far-reaching move, for the first time in 1989 ACYF proposed new policies on qualification requirements for teaching staff and home visitors. That proposed rulemaking reads:

> "The competence of the Head Start teacher and home visitor is one of the most important determinants of the success of the program. It is the training and experience of this staff that enables them to provide high quality and age appropriate experiences to children. Accordingly, ACYF proposes to require a minimum level of training for teachers prior to being put in charge of a classroom and for home visitors prior to being put in charge of a group of home based families. One way to meet these requirements is to hire teachers and home visitors with Child Development Associate (CDA) credentials. **Individuals with CDAs have demonstrated their competence in working in center- or home-based child development programs."**[1]

ACYF plans to implement this new training requirement for Head Start grantees in 1990 and will require every Head Start classroom teacher to have at minimal a CDA by 1992.[2] ACYF has also proposed additional funding to implement these program changes.

With the imminent passage of the Act for Better Child Care, or some other form of federal comprehensive child care legislation, opportunities for the early childhood profession to receive greater recognition will be available. The increased attention on the profession by parents, educators and policymakers can serve to bring even wider acceptance of the CDA Credential as an entry level qualification for those who work with young children.

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[1]Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, the Federal Register, December 8, 1988.

[2]Final regulations are still pending approval; thus the implementation deadline dates could change .

NATIONAL SURVEY OF CDA'S

Dear CDA,

Congratulations on becoming a CDA. I invite your participation in the first national survey of CDAs since 1983.

As the Council works to increase the professional status of the CDA Credential, we are often asked what benefits come to those who become CDAs? We think that you are the best group to tell us, and ask that you please complete this questionnaire and return it at your earliest convenience. The information that you share will help as we plan activities to enhance the future of early childhood education professionals.

Again, congratulations on your achievement as a CDA and thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Carol B. Phillips

Carol B. Phillips, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition

INSTRUCTIONS: WE ARE INTERESTED IN DESCRIBING CDA'S BOTH AT THE TIME THEY RECEIVED THEIR CREDENTIAL AND AT PRESENT.

THERE ARE FOUR SECTIONS TO THIS SURVEY. PLEASE READ AND ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS IN EACH SECTION. PLEASE NOTE THAT MOST QUESTIONS ASK YOU TO CHECK THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE OR FILL IN THE BLANK.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

(1) The year you were awarded your credential:
1985 ___ 1986 ___ 1987 ___ 1988 ___

(2) Setting endorsement that you earned:
Preschool ___ Infant/Toddler ___ Home Visitor ___ Family Day Care ___

(3) Bilingual specialization: Yes ___ No ___

(4) Your age when credentialed:
18-20 ___ 21-25 ___ 26-30 ___ 31-35 ___ 36-40 ___ 41-45 ___
46-49 ___ 51-55 ___ 56-60 ___ 61+ ___

(5) Ethnic Origin:
White ___ Black ___ Asian ___ Hispanic ___ Eskimo ___ Am. Indian ___

(6) Sex:
Female ___ Male ___

(7) State you presently live in: _____

(8) Were you ever a Head Start parent? Yes ___ No ___

(9) In the same program where you worked? Yes ___ No ___

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

AT THE TIME YOU EARNED YOUR CDA

(10) Years of experience in child care

0-5 ___ 6-10 ___ 11-15 ___

16-20 ___ 20+ ___

(11) Educational Background

___ Less than high school
___ 1-2 years High School
___ 3-4 years High School
___ High School diploma or GED
___ Some College
___ Two year college degree
___ Four year college degree
___ Graduate degree

(12) Degree major

___ Early childhood education
___ Child development
Other academic major _____

(13) Type of Setting

___ Day care (non-Head Start)
___ Head Start (center-based)
___ Head Start (home-based)
___ Preschool(half-day)
___ Family Day Care Home
Other: _____

(14) Position you held

___ Volunteer and/or parent
___ Assistant Teacher/Aide
___ Classroom Teacher
___ Home Visitor
___ Education Supv/Coor
___ Program/Center Director
___ Day Care Home Operator
___ Student teacher
Other: _____

WHAT YOU ARE CURRENTLY

(15) Years of experience in child care

0-5 ___ 6-10 ___

11-15 ___ 16-20 ___ 20+ ___

(16) Educational Background

___ Less than high school
___ 1-2 years High School
___ 3-4 years High School
___ High School diploma or GED
___ Some College
___ Two year college degree
___ Four year college degree
___ Graduate degree

(17) Degree major

___ Early childhood education
___ Child development
Other academic major _____

(18) Type of Setting now

___ Day Care (non-Head Start)
___ Head Start (center-based)
___ Head Start (home-based)
___ Preschool(half-day)
___ Family Day Care Home
___ Not in child care field
Other: _____

(19) Position you now hold

___ Volunteer and/or parent
___ Assistant Teacher/Aide
___ Classroom Teacher
___ Home Visitor
___ Education Supv/Coor
___ Program/Center Director
___ Day Care Home Operator
___ Not in child care
Other: _____

(20) Are you supervising other ECE personnel?
Yes ___ No ___

(21) If yes, how many? 1-2 ___ 3-5 ___ 5+ ___

TRAINING FOR CDA

(22) Did your employer pay all or part of the cost of your training? Yes ___ No ___

(23) Did your employer pay all or part of the cost of your registration/assessment fee? Yes ___ No ___

(24) Did another group pay all or part of the cost of your registration/assessment fee? Yes ___ No ___

(25) If yes, who: Family member___ State scholarship___ Club___ Church group ___
ECE association ___ Other: _____

(26) Where did you receive your CDA training? (check as many as apply)
Workshops in community ___ Local college ___ Trainer on site ___
Outside consultant ___ Other: _____

. . . . . .

SALARY/POSITION INCREASES AFTER RECEIVING YOUR CDA CREDENTIAL

(27) Did you receive any salary increases as a direct result of having earned the CDA Credential?
Yes ___ No ___

(28) If yes, check the appropriate range of annual salary increase:
Below $100___ $100-500___ $501-1000___ $1001-1500___ $1501-2000___ $2001 + ___

(29) How long after receiving your CDA did you receive your salary increase:
At the beginning of the next school year ___ As soon as credential was awarded ___
Other: _____

(30-33) Did you receive any increases in fringe benefits after receiving your CDA:
(30) vacation leave Yes ___ No ___ (32) sick leave Yes ___ No ___
(31) medical/hospitalization Yes ___ No ___ (33) retirement Yes ___ No ___

(34) Did you become eligible for a better position after receiving your CDA? Yes ___ No ___

(35) If yes, check the title nearest to that of your new position:
Director ___ Educational Coordinator ___ Teacher ___ Assistant Teacher ___
Other: _____

(36) Was this position with the same employer? Yes ___ No ___

(37) How long after receiving your CDA were you offered this position?
one year ___ two years ___ three years + ___

(38-44) If you are no longer employed in the child care field, please check the reason(s) why you left the field
(38) ___ Lack of benefits
(39) ___ Low salary
(40) ___ Burned out
(41) ___ Personal health
(42) ___ Family changes
(43) ___ No promotion possibilities
(44) ___ Not interested in field anymore
Other: _____